

## Diocesan Foundation Governors in Church of England Schools

The function of a Foundation Governor, as defined by Section 114 of the Education Act 1944, which is still in force, is: **“for the purpose of securing, so far as is practicable, that the character of the school as a voluntary school is preserved and developed, and, in particular, that the school is conducted in accordance with the provisions of any trust deed relating thereto”.**

In Church of England Schools, the church link should be reflected. In Voluntary Aided schools, religious education should be in accordance with the doctrines of the Church of England. The Diocesan Religious Education syllabus, containing substantial guidance on the teaching of Christianity and of other faiths, should be used as a basis for the school’s RE programme. Voluntary Controlled schools, whilst using the Local Authority agreed syllabus, may wish to draw on material from the Diocesan syllabus.

The governing body has a collective responsibility for many aspects of the school, including its standards, ethos, mission, curriculum, management, planning, personnel, financial and building matters, and promoting good links with parents, the Church and the wider community. Foundation governors share equally with other members of the governing body all of these responsibilities, but additionally, they have responsibilities which arise out of the school’s Trust Deed (or the religious foundation of the school where there is no Trust Deed).

The Trust Deed sets out the original purposes for which the school was founded. Foundation governors in Church of England schools are guardians of those purposes, and have important and specific responsibilities for maintaining and enhancing the school’s Anglican foundation.

## **Role of Foundation Governors**

Foundation governors share with all other governors the legal responsibilities of the governing body in managing the school to provide the best education for its pupils.

The additional responsibilities are:

- ❖ that the interests of the Church of England are safeguarded, and that the religious character of the school is preserved;
- ❖ that the collective worship of the school is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Trust Deed and as determined in the worship policy;
- ❖ that the religious education curriculum conforms to the religious education policy determined by the governing body (in Voluntary Aided schools only)

## **Ethos**

Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled Church of England schools are designated through the Religious Character of Schools (Designation Procedure) 1998, as having a religious character. The Instrument of Government must contain a statement of the school's ethos which is appropriate to the requirements of the Trust Deed.

The following ethos statement has been approved by the Archbishops' and the Bishops' Council and it is recommended that it is adopted by all Church of England schools:

"Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils".

## What can I do to be an effective Diocesan Foundation Governor?

In addition to your Governor role, as a Diocesan Foundation Governor you will be able to effectively support the Diocese by:

- ❖ receiving and circulating school governor briefings from the Manchester Diocesan Board of Education;
- ❖ acting as link governor for Manchester Diocese by reading school newsletters, attending events and by disseminating information to the members of your governing body;
- ❖ establishing an agenda item for each term, such as 'Communication from Manchester Diocese' so that information can be shared;
- ❖ attending training for Diocesan Governors held from time to time (often on Zoom), together with the annual Manchester Diocesan Church Schools' Conference, for which funding may be available from your school;
- ❖ keeping the Education Department informed of developments or proposals that might affect the Church of England foundation of the school.
- ❖ bearing in mind your role in upholding the Christian Distinctiveness of the school as set out in the original Trust Deed. This will impact the culture of the school and its learning environment and relationships between all members of the school and its extended community to the benefit of all.
- ❖ **John 10:10**  
**I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness.**

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